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GREAT BRITAIN  
AND  
GERMANY

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BY  
SPENSER WILKINSON

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# WHY WE ARE AT WAR

## GREAT BRITAIN'S CASE

BY MEMBERS OF THE OXFORD FACULTY  
OF MODERN HISTORY

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H. W. C. DAVIS.

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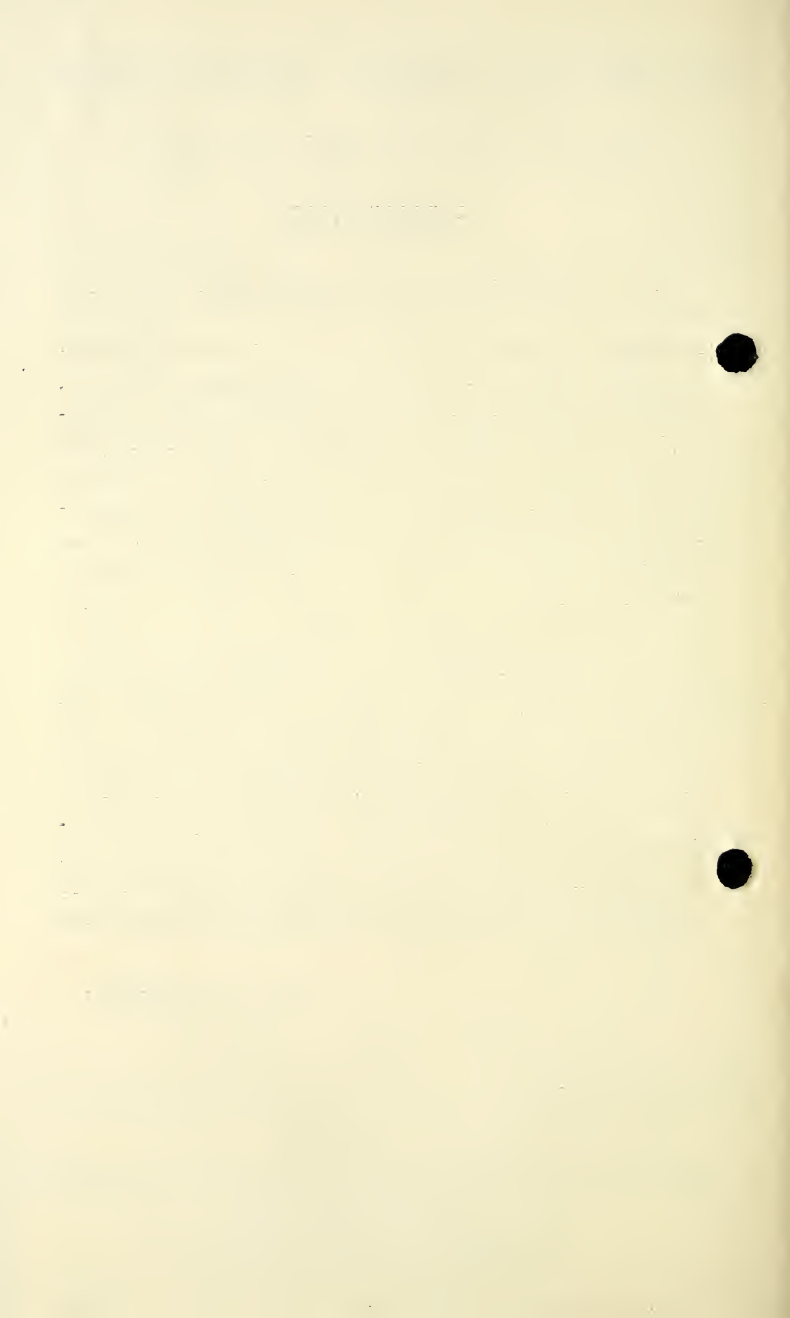
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## PREFACE

THE three letters printed in this pamphlet appeared originally in the *Springfield Republican*, a well-known American newspaper. Of the writers one is an Englishman, the other an American. Mr. Spenser Wilkinson, Chichele Professor of Military History in the University of Oxford, wrote spontaneously to the *Springfield Republican*, three weeks after the outbreak of the present war, to explain where, in the eyes of educated Englishmen, the responsibility for the conflagration lay. This letter is the first of our series. At the time of writing it, Professor Wilkinson had not seen the letter of Professor John W. Burgess, which was written a few days earlier, and which also appeared in the *Springfield Republican*. Professor Burgess holds a chair of Political Science and Constitutional Law in the University of Columbia; his credentials as a spokesman of German public opinion are set forth in his own letter. His letter is the second that we print. Professor Wilkinson then replied to Professor Burgess (Letter No. III). So far as we are aware, Professor Burgess made no rejoinder. The letters are reprinted at the desire of some who read them when they first appeared in print.

H. W. C. DAVIS.



## I

*To the Editor of The Republican :*

A hundred years ago the states of Europe, united under England's lead, fought for three years to shake off the yoke which Napoleon had put upon them. The Germans believed themselves fighting for freedom. After the peace they found that they had gained neither freedom nor nationhood. In 1848 they drove away their kinglets, declared themselves free and united, and offered the crown of all Germany to the Prussian king. He refused a crown offered by the people. Neither freedom nor union was achieved. Not the people's will, said Bismarck, but the Prussian army must control Germany.

In 1866 the Prussian army made good Bismarck's words, and conquered Germany. It made North Germany Prussian and cut South Germany in two, one-half to be shut out of the fatherland, the other half to be a Prussian protectorate. In 1870 Bismarck beguiled France into her rash attack. The Prussian army struck her down and tore from her lands whose people in 1789 had freely declared themselves Frenchmen for ever. The protected princes hailed as their emperor the Prussian king, whom Bismarck's constitution made their supreme war lord. Moltke, the iron soldier, declared that what had been won by the sword must be kept by the sword, as though the Prussian army could make wrong right.

'Conscience does make cowards of us all,' and Prussia for forty years has drilled Germany against the day when

France should demand her own again. France in her weakness turned to Russia. Thereupon Prussia had recourse to Austria, the jailor of peoples, freedom's foe. Italy, freed and united when Prussia struck down Austria, felt humiliated by the French seizure of that Tunis which she thought her own inheritance, and, mortified, sought support in a defensive alliance with Austria.

The Emperor Francis Joseph, who began his reign in warfare for his dynasty against his peoples, subduing the Hungarians with the aid of the Slavs, and then the Slavs with the aid of the Hungarians, was told, when he and his Germans were shut out of Germany, to turn his face to the east and to supplant the Turk as overlord of Slavs and Greeks. But Russia had set her hand to the freeing of the Slavs and Greeks. She had helped to make a small but independent Servia. In 1878, after a great war, she made a free Bulgaria. Her methods were not those of the West, but they fulfilled the purpose and made Bulgaria and Servia free in spite of Austria.

But she had to pay the price. The emancipator of the serfs, the liberator of Bulgaria, had to acquiesce in Austria's occupation of Bosnia. Thus a Serb country which loathed the Austrians and fought against them was crushed and conquered in a great war that lasted a year and in which Austria employed 200,000 men. In those days Disraeli supported Turkey and Austria, but five-and-twenty years later his pupil Salisbury discovered that he had 'backed the wrong horse'. Russia, thwarted in her efforts to give nationhood to the peoples of European Turkey, was impelled to make an alliance with France.

Bismarck knew that France could never forgive or

forget her dismemberment. He saw that Russia resented his support of Austria and he therefore restrained his Austrian ally, made her compromise with Russia and declared that Bulgaria was not worth the bones of a Pomeranian grenadier. He saw the risk of forcing France and Russia into alliance, and in 1888 increased the German army by 800,000 men.

Bismarck's last deliberate work was to teach his countrymen the falsehood that England was their enemy. He gave Lord Granville to understand that Germany wanted no colonies. Then he put to him questions apparently harmless and of no urgency, published Lord Granville's answers without their full context, and so misrepresented England as opposed to the acquisition by Germany of any possessions whatever beyond the seas. Germany was furious and England puzzled. Thus was sown in Germany that hatred of England which has for thirty years been nourished by Prussian publicists and burst into flame during the South African War, which no one in Germany understood.

The Emperor William II, when he found himself the supreme war-lord, took quite literally both that name and the title of a once famous book, *Prussia Over All*, modified in the modern national anthem into *Germany Over All in the World*. The supreme war-lord must rule at sea as well as on land, and William as emperor proclaimed that Germany's future was on the water. Germany was of course delighted, and the South Germans, who had never seen the sea, to a man subscribed for battleships.

The thoughts of the Prussian Army have been well expressed of late years by General von Bernhardt, who has written volumes to preach to his countrymen the

gospel of force. The mighty German Army has been created, he says, not for peace but for conquest. Let us go forth conquering and to conquer; let us crush France; let us push back the too numerous Russians and, above all, let us destroy England. These strains dinned into the emperor's ears found a response.

Under William II Germany has become self-assertive. Twice in the last ten years when she seemed determined to overbear France with regard to Morocco, the British Government has intimated that an attack on France would mean war with England. The first time was in the crisis which ended with the resignation of Delcassé. The second was in 1911, when the emperor took the high-handed step of sending the *Panther* to Agadir. At that time he and his advisers thought England paralysed by the dispute over the Parliament Act. The Prussian military party was furious with the emperor because after the English declaration of policy he changed his attitude and did not make war.

Thereafter an enormous increase of the army was voted and carried out, and more recently a special war-tax was laid on the German people for the purpose of military preparations. All pointed toward a war for which no reason was visible except the Prussian doctrine that Germany was in danger because the geography of Europe places her between France and Russia. Two months ago no cause of quarrel between the nations was known. The English had pretty well forgotten the hatred expressed of them in Germany at the time of the South African War; voices were raised in France to suggest that it would be wrong to begin a war even for Alsace-Lorraine. The trouble in the Balkans, except in Albania, seemed to be settled.

For many months Austria has followed toward Servia

and Montenegro a high-handed policy which the other Powers tolerated for the sake of peace. She had three army corps assembled in Bosnia ready for action, which could only be against Servia. To review these three army corps the heir apparent, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, went to Sarajevo, where he was joined by his wife. There they were both assassinated by malcontent Bosnians. The Austrian official press instantly laid the blame on the Servian Government before there could have been time for any inquiry.

On July 23, Austria sent an ultimatum to Servia in such terms as any self-respecting government must reject, requiring its entire acceptance in forty-eight hours, and at the same time announced that no European Government would be permitted to discuss the matter. That was a direct challenge to Russia, an intimation that Russia must look on at the destruction of a free state whose struggles for independence she had mightily helped. The ultimatum had been telegraphed in full to the German emperor before it was sent.

England pleaded for delay, for time for the powers to consider. Russia urged Servia to humiliate herself to the utmost but not to abdicate her sovereignty. Servia complied with this advice, but Austria, implacable, declared war against her. Thereupon Russia mobilized her army, for in the circumstances she must either fight or haul down her flag. Thereupon Germany mobilized and France had to follow suit.

The British Government still negotiated. The British people, having made friends with France, felt that they could not desert her. The British Government asked Germany to undertake to respect that Belgian neutrality which all the powers had by treaty guaranteed. The reply was a brutal negative and immediate invasion.

Thus England had no choice and declared war against Germany. A significant judgement was pronounced by Italy when she said that Germany and Austria were the aggressors, and that no treaty bound Italy to help them in an unprovoked attack. So Italy is neutral.

Thus Germany and Austria have declared in common that they will have their way in Europe, and that if it is not accepted they will impose it upon Europe by force. If they succeed, the King of Prussia will be the overlord of Europe. If Europe is to remain free the nations that Germany has challenged must defeat and disarm her and compel her to be content to till her own soil and to mind her own business, not as a ruler of other nations but as one among the united states of Europe.

SPENSER WILKINSON.

LONDON, ENG.,

*August 22, 1914.*

## II

*To the Editor of 'The Republican':*

This is no time and no subject when, or upon which, one should speak lightly, ignorantly, or with prejudice. It is one of the world's most serious moments, and the views and sympathies now formed will determine the course of the world's development for many years to come. Heavy indeed is the responsibility which he incurs who would assume the rôle of teacher at this juncture, and it is his first duty to present the credentials which warrant his temerity.

First of all, I am an Anglo-American of the earliest stock and the most pronounced type. I have existed

here, potentially or actually, since the year 1638, and my European cousins of to-day are squires and curates in Dorsetshire. Moreover, I admire and revere England, not only because of what she has done for liberty and self-government at home, but because she has borne the white man's burden throughout the world and borne it true and well.

On the other hand, what I possess of higher learning has been won in Germany. I have studied in her famous universities and bear their degrees, and in three of them have occupied the teacher's chair. I have lived ten years of my life among her people and enjoy a circle of valued friendships which extends from Königsberg to Strassburg, from Hamburg to Munich, and from Osnabrück to Berchtesgarden, and which reaches through all classes of society, from the occupant of the throne to the dweller in the humble cottage. I have known four generations of Hohenzollerns, and, of the three generations now extant, have been brought into rather close contact with the members of two of them. While, as to the men of science and letters and politics who have made the Germany of the last half-century, I have known them nearly all, and have sat, as student, at the feet of many of them. I must concede that of English descent though I am, still I feel somewhat less at home in the motherland than in the fatherland. Nevertheless, I am conscious of the impulse to treat each with fairness in any account I may attempt to give of their motives, purposes, and actions.

It was in the year 1871, in the midst of the Franco-Prussian war, that I first trod the soil of Germania, and it was from and with those who fought that war on the German side that I first learned the politics and diplomacy of Europe. Almost from the first day that I took

my seat in the lecture room of the university, I imbibed the doctrine that the great national, international, and world-purpose of the newly-created German empire was to protect and defend the Teutonic civilization of continental Europe against the oriental Slavic quasi-civilization on the one side, and the decaying Latin civilization on the other.

After a little I began to hear of the 'pan-Slavic policy' of Russia and the 'revanche policy' of France. For a while the latter, the policy of France for retaking Alsace-Lorraine, occupied the chief attention. But in 1876, with the Russian attack upon the Turks, the pan-Slavic policy of Russia—the policy of uniting the Slavs in the German empire, the Austro-Hungarian empire, and in the Turkish empire, with and under the sway of Russia—was moved into the foreground. All western Europe recognized the peril to modern civilization and the powers of Europe assembled at Berlin in 1878 to meet and master it.

The astute British premier, Lord Beaconsfield, supported by the blunt and masterful Bismarck, directed the work of the congress, and the pan-Slavic policy of Russia was given a severe setback. Russia was allowed to take a little almost worthless territory in Europe and territory of greater value in Asia; Roumania, Servia, and Montenegro were made independent states; Bulgaria was given an autonomous administration with a European Christian prince but under the nominal suzerainty of the Turkish sultan; and the Turkish provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, then almost free zones infested by bandits, were placed under Austro-Hungarian administration, also subject to the nominal suzerainty of the sultan.

With this the much suspected and dreaded activities

of Russia were directed toward Asia, and Russia was now for more than twenty years, from 1880 to 1902, occupied chiefly with the extension of her empire in the Orient. The German empire and the Austro-Hungarian empire were delivered for the moment from this great peril and enabled to pursue the line of peaceable development and progress. The greater security to the eastern borders of these great states, thus established, also helped to reduce the force of the French spirit of revenge, as the prospect of its satisfaction became more distant.

It was during this period, however, that Germany developed from an agricultural to a manufacturing and commercial community, that is, became a competitor of Great Britain and France, especially of Great Britain, in world industry. Her marvelous growth in this direction excited soon the jealousy, the envy, and then the hostility of Great Britain. We in the United States, however, reaped great advantage from the industrial and commercial competition between the two great powers and we were amused at the pettishness of Great Britain in representing it as something unfair and illegitimate. We little suspected to what direful results it would lead.

When Edward VII came to the throne, in the year 1901, he saw Great Britain's interests in the Orient threatened by Russia's policy of extension in Asia and her commercial interests throughout the world threatened by the active and intelligent competition of the Germans. He, as all rulers at the moment of accession, felt the ambition to do something to relieve the disadvantages, to say the least, under which in these respects his country was laboring. He began that course of diplomacy for which he won the title of peace lover. The first element of it was the approach to Japan and

encouragement to Japan to resist the advance of Russia. This movement culminated in the war between Russia and Japan of the years 1904-5, in which Russia was worsted and checked in the realization of her Asiatic policy and thrown back upon Europe.

The next element in the diplomacy of the peace-loving king was the fanning into flame again of the 'revanche' spirit of France by the arrangement of the quasi-alliance, called the entente, between Great Britain, France, and Russia, aimed distinctly and avowedly against what was known as the triple alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy, which had for thirty years kept the peace of Europe. The third and last element of this pacific program was the seduction of Italy from the triple alliance, by rousing the irredentist hopes for winning from Austria the Trente district in south Tyrol, which Italy covets.

It is hardly necessary for me to call attention to the extreme peril involved in this so-called peaceful diplomacy to the German and Austro-Hungarian empires. I myself became first fully aware of it on June 27, 1905. On that day I had an extended interview with a distinguished British statesman in the House of Commons in London. I was on my way to Wilhelmshohe to meet His Majesty the German Emperor, to arrange with His Majesty the cartel of exchange of educators between universities in the two countries. When I revealed this fact to my host the conversation immediately took a turn which made me distinctly feel that a grave crisis was impending in the relations of Great Britain to Germany.

I was so firmly impressed by it, that I felt compelled to call my host's attention to the fact that the great number of American citizens of German extraction, the friendliness of the German states to the cause of the Union during our civil war, and the virtual control of

American universities by men educated at German universities, would all make for close and continuing friendship between Germany and the United States. When I arrived in Germany, I asked in high quarters for the explanation of my London experience and was told that it was the moment of greatest tension in the Morocco affair, when all feared that, at British instigation, France would grasp the sword.

The larger part of the next two years I spent in Germany as exchange professor in the three universities of Berlin, Bonn, and Leipsic, also as lecturer before the bar association at Vienna. Naturally I formed a really vast circle of acquaintances among the leading men of both empires, and the constant topics of conversation everywhere, at all times and among all classes, was the growing peril to Germany and Austro-Hungary of the revived pan-Slavic policy and program of Russia, the re-inflamed 'revanche' of France and Great Britain's intense commercial jealousy.

In the month of August, 1907, I was again at Wilhelms-hohe. The imperial family were at the castle, and somewhere about the 10th of the month it became known that King Edward would make the emperor a visit or rather a call, for it was nothing more cordial than that, on the 14th.

On the afternoon of the 13th, the day before the arrival of the king, I received a summons to go to the castle and remain for dinner with the emperor. When I presented myself, I found the emperor surrounded by his highest officials, Prince Buelow, the chancellor of the empire, Prince Hohenlohe, the imperial governor of Alsace-Lorraine, Prince Radolin, the German ambassador to France, Excellency von Lucanus, the chief of the emperor's civil cabinet, Gen. Count von Huelsen Haeseller,

the chief of the emperor's military cabinet, Field Marshal von Plessen, Chief Court Marshal Count Zu Eulenburg, Lord High Chamberlain Baron von dem Gnesebeck and the oberstallmeister, Baron von Reischach.

The dinner was on the open terrace of the castle looking toward the Hercules hights. At its close the empress and the ladies withdrew into the castle and the emperor with the gentlemen remained outside. His Majesty rose from his seat in the middle of the table and went to one end of it, followed by Prince Buelow, Prince Hohenlohe, Prince Radolin, and Excellency von Lucanus. His Majesty directed me to join the group, and so soon as we were seated the chief of the civil cabinet turned to me and said that he was afraid that our good friend, President Roosevelt, unwittingly did Europe an injury in mediating between Russia and Japan, since this had turned the whole force of the pan-Slavic program of Russia back upon Europe. All present spoke of the great peril to middle Europe of this change.

Then both the German ambassador to France and the governor of Alsace-Lorraine spoke discouragingly of the great increase of hostile feeling on the part of the French toward Germany, and, finally, the part that Great Britain had played and was playing in bringing about both of these movements was dwelt upon with great seriousness mingled with evidences of much uneasiness. King Edward came the next morning at about 10 o'clock and took his departure at about 3 in the afternoon. Whether any remonstrances were made to His Majesty in regard to the great peril, which he, wittingly or unwittingly, was helping to bring upon middle Europe, I have never known. It seemed to me, however, that after that date he modified considerably his diplomatic activity. But he had sown the seed in well-prepared

ground and the harvest was bound to come. The three great forces making for universal war in Europe, namely, the pan-Slavic program of Russia, the 'revanche' of France, and Great Britain's commercial jealousy of Germany, had been by his efforts brought together. It could not fail to produce the catastrophe. It was only a question of time.

The following year, the year 1908, saw the revolt of the young Turkish party in Constantinople which forced from the sultan the constitution of July, 1908. According to this constitution, all the peoples under the sovereignty of the sultan were called upon to send representatives to the Turkish Parliament. Both Bulgaria and Bosnia-Herzegovina were nominally subject to that sovereignty, according to the provisions of the Berlin Congress of the Powers of 1878. For thirty years Bulgaria had been practically an independent state, and during thirty years Austro-Hungary had poured millions upon millions into Bosnia-Herzegovina, building roads, railroads, hotels, hospitals and schools, establishing the reign of law and order, and changing the population from a swarm of loafers, beggars, and bandits to a body of hard-working, frugal, and prosperous citizens.

What now were Bulgaria and Austro-Hungary to do? Were they to sit quiet and allow the restoration of the actual sovereignty and government of Turkey in and over Bulgaria and Bosnia-Herzegovina? Could any rational human being in the world have expected or desired that? They simply, on the self-same day, namely, October 5, 1908, renounced the nominal suzerainty of the sultan, Bulgaria becoming thereby an independent state and Bosnia-Herzegovina remaining what it had actually been since 1878, only with no further nominal relation to the Turkish government.

Some American newspapers have called this the robbery of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Austro-Hungary, and have made out Austro-Hungary to be an aggressor. I have not seen, however, the slightest indication that any of these have the faintest conception of what actually took place. Europe acquiesced in it without much ado. It was said that Russia expressed dissatisfaction, but that Germany pacified her.

Four more years of peace rolled by, during which, in spite of the facts that Austro-Hungary gave a local constitution with representative institutions to Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Alsace-Lorraine was admitted to representation in the federal council, as well as the Reichstag of the German empire, that is, was made substantially a state of the empire, the pan-Slavic schemes of Russia, the French spirit of revenge and the British commercial jealousy grew and developed and became welded together, until the triple entente became virtually a triple alliance directed against the two great states of middle Europe.

Russia had now recovered from the losses of the Japanese war and the internal anarchy which followed it; France had perfected her military organization; Turkey was now driven by the allied Balkan States out of the calculation as an anti-Russian power; Bulgaria, Austro-Hungary's ally, was now completely exhausted by the war with Turkey and that with her Balkan allies, now become enemies; and Great Britain was in dire need of an opportunity to divert the mind of her people away from the internal questions which were threatening to disrupt her constitution.

The practiced ear could discern the buzz of the machinery lifting the hammer to strike the hour of Armageddon. And it struck. The foul murder of the

heir of the Hapsburgs set the civilized world in horror and the Austro-Hungarian empire in mourning. In tracing the ramifications of the treacherous plot, the lines were found to run to Belgrade. And when Austro-Hungary demanded inquiry and action by a tribunal in which representatives from Austro-Hungary should sit, Servia repelled the demand as inconsistent with her dignity. Believing that inquiry and action by Servia alone would be no inquiry and no action, Austro-Hungary felt obliged to take the chastisement of the criminals and their abettors into its own hands.

Then Russia intervened to stay the hand of Austro-Hungary and asked the German emperor to mediate between Austro-Hungary and Servia. The emperor undertook the task. But while in the midst of it he learned that Russia was mobilizing troops upon his own border. He immediately demanded of Russia that this should cease, but without avail or even reply. He protested again with the like result. Finally, at midnight on the 31st of July, his ambassador at St. Petersburg laid the demand before the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs that the Russian mobilization must cease within twelve hours, otherwise Germany would be obliged to mobilize.

At the same time the emperor directed his ambassador in Paris to inquire of the French government whether, in case of war between Germany and Russia, France would remain neutral. The time given expired without any explanation or reply from Russia and without any guarantee or assurance from France. The federal council of the German empire, consisting of representatives from the twenty-five states and the imperial territory of Alsace-Lorraine, then authorized the declaration of war against Russia, which declaration applied, according to

the sound principle of international jurisprudence, to all her allies refusing to give guarantee of their neutrality.

As France could move faster than Russia, the Germans turned the force of their arms upon her. They undertook to reach her by way of what they supposed to be the lines of least resistance. These lay through the neutral states of Belgium and Luxemburg. They claimed that France had already violated the neutrality of both by invasion and by the flying of their war airships over them, and they marched their columns into both.

Belgium resisted. The Germans offered to guarantee the independence and integrity of Belgium and indemnify her for all loss or injury if she would not further resist the passage of German troops over her soil. She still refused and turned to Great Britain. Great Britain now intervened, and in the negotiations with Germany demanded as the price of her neutrality that Germany should not use her navy against either France or Russia and should desist from her military movements through Belgium, and when the Germans asked to be assured that Great Britain herself would respect the neutrality of Belgium throughout the entire war on the basis of the fulfilment of her requirements by Germany, the British Government made no reply, but declared war on Germany.

And so we have the alignment. Germany, Austria, and probably Bulgaria on one side, Russia, Servia, Montenegro, Belgium, France, and England on the other, and rivers of blood have already flowed. And we stand gaping at each other, and each is asking the others who did it. Whose is the responsibility, and what will be the outcome? Now if I have not already answered the former question I shall not try to answer it. I shall leave each one, in view of the account I have given, to

settle the question with his own judgement and conscience. I will only say that, as for myself, I thank John Morley and John Burns—the man of letters and the man of labour, that they have rent the veil of diplomatic hypocrisy and have washed their hands clean from the stain of this blunder crime.

Finally, as to the outcome, not much can yet be said. There is nothing so idle as prophecy, and I do not like to indulge in it. Whether the giant of middle Europe will be able to break the bonds, which in the last ten years have been wound about him and under whose smarting cut he is now writhing, or the fetters will be riveted tighter, cannot easily be foretold. But, assuming the one or the other, we may speculate with something more of probable accuracy regarding the political situation which will result.

The triumph of Germany—Austro-Hungary—Bulgaria can never be so complete as to make any changes in the present map of Europe. All that that could effect would be the momentary abandonment of the Russian pan-Slavic program, the relegation to dormancy of the French 'revanche' and the stay of Great Britain's hand from the destruction of German commerce. On the other hand, the triumph of Great Britain-Russia-France cannot fail to give Russia the mastery of the continent of Europe and restore Great Britain to her sovereignty over the seas. These two great powers, who now already between them possess almost the half of the whole world, would then, indeed, control the destinies of the earth.

Well may we draw back in dismay before such a consummation. The 'rattle of the saber' would then be music to our ears in comparison with the crack of the Cossack's knout and the clanking of Siberian chains,

while the burden of taxation which we would be obliged to suffer in order to create and maintain the vast navy and army necessary for the defence of our territory and commerce throughout the world against these gigantic powers with their oriental ally, Japan, would sap our wealth, endanger our prosperity and threaten the very existence of republican institutions.

This is no time for shallow thought or flippant speech. In a public sense it is the most serious moment of our lives. Let us not be swayed in our judgement by prejudice or minor considerations. Men and women like ourselves are suffering and dying for what they believe to be the right, and the world is in tears. Let us wait and watch patiently and hope sincerely that all this agony is a great labour-pain of history and that there shall be born through it a new era of prosperity, happiness, and righteousness for all mankind.

JOHN W. BURGESS.

ATHENWOOD, NEWPORT, R.I.,

*August 17, 1914.*

### III

*To the Editor of 'The Republican':*

Will you permit me as an Englishman to try to explain to your readers the feelings with which I have read the letter written to you by Professor John W. Burgess on August 17, published in *The Republican* of August 19. I agree with the professor in holding that, when five great nations are fighting for their existence and for their ideals, he who would assume the rôle of teacher should not speak lightly, ignorantly, or with prejudice. I think his first duty should be to seek the truth and to tell it as well as he can. I do not agree

that his first duty is to 'present his credentials'. However, as Professor Burgess thinks credentials are the first thing, I will examine those which he submits. He relies first of all on his blood, of which he judges that it must be good, because he comes of an English stock. He is proud of that because England has done something for liberty and self-government at home and borne the white man's burden throughout the world. Here, I feel, is an American who is bound to do justice to my country and, as you describe him as a scholar and historian, there is a second strong point in his favour. I have myself been for many years a student of the historians from Thucydides to Ranke. The shelves in front of me hold more than thirty volumes of Ranke's histories from which I have learned as much as I have been able to take in. Ranke set up, I think, the right standard of impartiality. The historian's one aim, he thought, was to understand what had happened. Ranke wanted to understand the history of Europe; he did not start out to praise or blame or to take sides. He did not confine himself to his own country of Germany. In 1829 he wrote an account of the Servian revolution, afterwards enlarged into a history of Servia. From this work I first learned that the cause of Servia in her struggle for freedom is that of European civilization against barbarism. From Ranke's history of England I first learned that England lives and has lived not merely for herself, but for the freedom of Europe and for the resistance to its conquest by any empire or by any despot. We have in England a historical school of which Stubbs, Freeman, York-Powell, and Firth have in turn been the representatives at Oxford. Its leading idea is that historical inquiry must rest upon the scrupulous examination of the evidence.

I thought I might expect from an American historian of English stock and German training that he would wish to understand, which means of course in a European affair, to understand all the nations, and that he would be careful in his sifting of evidence; that when he wanted to know what England was doing he would desire English evidence, just as when he wanted to know what Germany was doing he might accept German evidence, and that in each case he would make full allowance for the possible passions and prejudices of his witnesses.

Now to his account of his methods and conclusions. His learning, he tells us, he owes to Germany. As far as I know all scholars of high rank have learned much from Germany, but in my own country we think it wise not to confine ourselves only to German sources of knowledge; we find we have much to learn from leaders of thought in other countries also, in France, in Italy, in Russia and in America. Professor Burgess in his letter gives me no means of judging of his erudition, but he tells at some length of what he learned in the German lecture-rooms. There he says, 'I imbibed the doctrine that the national, international, and world-purpose of the newly-created German empire was to protect and defend the Teutonic civilization of continental Europe against the oriental Slavic quasi-civilization on the one side and the decaying Latin civilization on the other.' That is a sentence worth weighing. Let us see what it means.

Teutonic, it will be observed, is only a full-dress name for German. 'The Teutonic civilization of continental Europe' is the German way of saying that such civilization as there is in Europe is the gift of Germany. German professors are very fond of this theme, which is no

doubt patriotic. The doctrine then which the professor imbibed is that the German empire stands for Germany and that Germany thinks that she ought to impose herself upon France, Italy, Spain, and Portugal ('the decaying Latin civilization') and upon Russia, Servia, and Bulgaria ('the oriental Slavic quasicivilization'). It seems to me that Germany very easily imposed herself upon Professor Burgess, for this one sentence contains Germany's whole case at the present moment, and Professor Burgess in his long letter merely writes large the doctrine which he imbibed in 1871. His numerous German friends are personifications of that one sentence. The four generations of Hohenzollerns, who have won his heart, are its embodiment.

What I wish to examine is the method adopted by this German-trained historian to ascertain the truth. He tells us that in June 1905 he discovered from a British statesman that a crisis was impending in the relations between Great Britain and Germany. His method of finding out what England's policy was did not consist in inquiries in London, but in questions asked in high quarters in Germany, where he was told that 'all feared that at British instigation the French would grasp the sword'. In 1907, the professor learned from the German emperor that President Roosevelt had done Europe an injury in mediating between Russia and Japan. The Emperor and Professor Burgess are evidently anxious to instruct America. Professor Burgess has a good deal to say about the policy of King Edward VII, and of the agreement with France negotiated in 1904 by Lord Lansdowne. The text of that agreement has been published; it was an arrangement for settling a number of long-standing disputes between England and France, which Professor Burgess

discusses apparently in complete ignorance of its nature. He goes on to say that the entente between Great Britain, France and Russia was aimed against the triple alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy. Here comes out the professor's impartiality. To his mind it was right and proper that Germany, Austria, and Italy should be allied, even though Germany's mission is directed against decaying Latin civilization; but when England, France, and Russia compare notes he thinks they are doing something wicked. Surely a professor, before turning against the land from which his ancestors came, should have read Sir Edward Grey's speech of August 3, in which that statesman explained that when the late crisis began, England was not committed by any treaty or agreement to co-operation either with France or Russia; that the governments of those two countries were reminded that this was the case and that the British government was prepared to consider a policy of neutrality on condition that Germany should respect the neutrality of Belgium. It is true that English neutrality was rendered difficult because in 1911, when Germany was threatening to attack France, naval arrangements were made by which the British navy would have defended the French coast. Those arrangements had not since been materially altered, largely because no one either in France or in England thought there was any probability of war. But when war suddenly came the British government felt that, things being as they were, it would be dishonourable to leave the French coast exposed to an attack against which, owing to those arrangements, France could make no defence.

Two statements made by the professor strike me as amazing. 'Great Britain was in dire need of an

opportunity to divert the mind of her people away from the internal questions.' A German may believe that. Every man who knows anything of England is well aware that it is nonsense. Our internal questions remain open ; their difficulty is not diminished, but our people are not so mad as to fight each other with the enemy at the door. ' In tracing the ramifications of the treacherous plot<sup>1</sup> the lines were found to run to Belgrade.' How does the professor know that ? The statement rests on nothing but the word of Count Forgach, whose credentials are that in his house were forged the documents by the aid of which the Austrian foreign office a few years ago attempted to perpetrate the judicial murder of a number of Croatian subjects of Austria.

Whether it is true, as Professor Burgess asserts, that England has done something for liberty and self-government and has borne the white man's burden, is not for Englishmen to decide : it must be left to historians who will take more trouble to investigate this country's work and spirit than Professor Burgess, whose testimony can have no more value than his methods.

I have some friends in America. I remember when I was a little boy at school the news of the bombardment of Fort Sumter. For four years in my home the talk was of nothing but the good cause, that of the Union and of freedom in the United States. It was perhaps as good an education as that of a German lecture-room, though I, too, have frequented German lecture-rooms and have a multitude of German friends. I should like to be allowed to send a message to my friends in America, not an impartial message but an English one. Six weeks ago this country was full of good will to all mankind and to the German people. We were not

<sup>1</sup> i. e. the plot to murder the Archduke at Sarajevo.

thinking of war ; we were not ready for war ; those few, of whom I am one, who have for many years been pointing out the danger of such a catastrophe as has now burst upon the world, have never been listened to, have never been taken seriously. England was entirely absorbed in the struggle for a further advance in freedom and for its establishment upon a broad and firm basis in Ireland.

This war has come upon us like a thunderbolt. Since it came we have all had one thought for our country and for ourselves, and that thought is duty. We are not organized as Germany is ; we are not trained to arms ; we have been caught, as were the people of the North in 1861 ; we shall have to pass through a fiery trial for which there is no precedent. It may be that we shall go down in the struggle, but we shall go into it united and in good faith. The faith that we have is this : We recognize freely the fine quality of the Germans ; we do not hate them as Professor Burgess imagines. We think there is room in Europe \* for many nations, of which each has its good work to do. We think, however, that Austria's attack upon Servia was an attempt to murder a small nation and Germany's attack upon Belgium its parallel. We find ourselves unexpectedly fighting side by side with France and in conjunction with Russia, and we see our national existence and our freedom threatened as they never were before. Teutonic civilization may be a good thing, though we shudder at its work in Belgium. But we think England of some use in the world. We are her children, and we shall fight for her—a good many of us will have to die for her. If we disappear we are not going to complain ; it is right that if the tree does not bear fruit it should be cut down and not cumber

the ground. But we have faith in our England still, and in that faith we live. We have faith, too, in righteousness. We cherish John Bright's maxim, 'Be just and fear not.' We are going to stand by that, not fall by it.

SPENSER WILKINSON.

LONDON,

*September 3, 1914.*

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